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THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC

POLAND: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

1. THE LATEST DISPUTE BETWEEN SOLIDARNOSC AND THE POLISH AUTHORITIES OVER THE ARREST OF A UNION MEMBER IS THE MOST SERIOUS CLASH SINCE THE FINAL REGISTRATION OF SOLIDARNOSC. THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THEM REMAINS VERY GREAT. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN POLAND IS CONTINUING TO DETERIORATE AND THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT OF IMPROVEMENT. THE PARTY IS STILL IN SOME DISARRAY.
2. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTY AND SOLIDARNOSC REMAIN DIFFICULT. THE LEADERS OF SOLIDARNOSC ARE DIVIDED OVER HOW FAR THE UNION SHOULD CO-OPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN IMPROVING PRODUCTION. AFTER THE REGISTRATION OF SOLIDARNOSC THE MODERATES APPEARED TO BE IN THE ASCENDANCY, AND THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE DECIDED THAT THE UNION SHOULD SUPPORT ONLY 4 MINOR WAGE CLAIMS AND SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON ITS OWN INTERNAL ORGANISATION, INCLUDING ELECTIONS AT ALL LEVELS. BEFORE THIS SOLIDARNOSC HAD SECURED TWO NOTABLE VICTORIES IN CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES: THE SIT-IN OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND CULTURAL WORKERS IN GDANSK WAS SETTLED WITH GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT TO PAY RISES AND TO SHARP OVERALL INCREASES IN THE STATE BUDGET FOR THESE AREAS; AND SIX PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS IN CZESTOCHOWA WERE DISMISSED FOLLOWING PROTESTS ABOUT THEIR REPRESSIVE POLICIES TOWARDS THE UNION. THIS LAST CLIMBDOWN BY THE AUTHORITIES WAS PARTICULARLY NOTABLE AS THE FIRST INSTANCE IN WHICH GOVERNMENT AND UNION OFFICIALS HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT CONCERNING GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS: THIS FACT WAS CAREFULLY OBSCURED IN THE POLISH PRESS. SOME FACTORY MANAGERS HAVE ALSO BEEN REMOVED IN RESPONSE TO WORKERS' DEMANDS.
3. THE PARTY IS ADOPTING A TWO-FOLD APPROACH TO SOLIDARNOSC. IT IS RECONCILED TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNION AS AN UNAVOIDABLE REALITY FOR THE TIME BEING AND IS SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN THE MODERATES IN ITS LEADERSHIP AND TO GAIN THEIR CO-OPERATION IN OVERCOMING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THIS APPROACH WAS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE MEETING BETWEEN KANIA AND WALESKA. AT THE SAME TIME THE PARTY IS ADOPTING AN INCREASINGLY HOSTILE ATTITUDE TO "ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS", MEANING DISSIDENT GROUP AND THE RADICALS IN SOLIDARNOSC. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT EAST EUROPEAN LEADERS ARE

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URGING THE POLES TO TAKE HARSH ACTION AGAINST THESE PEOPLE; BUT SO FAR THE POLISH LEADERS HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT, SINCE ACTION AGAINST RADICAL UNION LEADERS OR EVEN DISSIDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNIONS WAS BOUND TO PROVOKE A STRONG REACTION, INCLUDING PROBABLY WIDESPREAD STRIKES. THE AUTHORITIES HAD HOWEVER ARRESTED TWO MEMBERS OF THE CONFEDERATION FOR AN INDEPENDENT POLAND (KPN), A RIGHT-WING NATIONALIST ORGANISATION WITHOUT PROVOKING MORE THAN A PRIVATE PROTEST FROM SOLIDARNOSC: THE UNION WAS APPARENTLY WARY OF BEING TARRD WITH KPN'S ANTI-SOVIET BRUSH. THE ARREST OF A SOLIDARNOSC MEMBER FOR DUPLICATING COPIES OF A CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF "ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS", AND OF THE OFFICIAL WHO GAVE HIM THE DOCUMENT, LED TO THREATS OF A WIDESPREAD STRIKE IN THE WARSAW AREA AND A NUMBER OF FURTHER DEMANDS INCLUDING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE POWERS OF THE POLICE AND THE RELEASE OF DISSIDENTS INCLUDING THE TWO KPN MEMBERS. THESE PURELY POLITICAL DEMANDS CLEARLY WENT WELL BEYOND THE UNION'S AGREED TERMS OF REFERENCE. AFTER NEGOTIATIONS THE LAST DEMAND WAS DROPPED, THE GOVERNMENT AGREED TO TALKS ON OTHER ISSUES, AND THE TWO MEN INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT WERE RELEASED, THOUGH CHARGES AGAINST THEM WERE NOT DROPPED. THE REGIME HAS THUS MADE FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO THE UNION IN THE FACE OF A STRIKE THREAT.

4. THE SITUATION IN THE PARTY ITSELF ON THE EVE OF THE VII PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE REMAINS UNCERTAIN. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE GRASS-ROOTS PRESSURE FOR THE EARLY CONVOCATION OF A PARTY CONGRESS, BUT THE LEADERSHIP PROBABLY FEARS THAT AN EARLY CONGRESS, COULD NOT FULFIL POPULAR EXPECTATIONS FOR A RADICAL REFORM OF POLAND'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE.

WIDESPREAD CHANGES IN PARTY COMMITTEES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL - 21 PARTY FIRST SECRETARIES, OR NEARLY HALF THE TOTAL, HAVE BEEN REPLACED SINCE SEPTEMBER - HAVE BEEN USED TO REMOVE THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO CURRENT TRENDS IN PARTY POLICY, MOSTLY CONSERVATIVE OFFICIALS WHO SEE THESE TRENDS AS EITHER IDEOLOGICALLY UNACCEPTABLE OR THREATENING THEIR PERSONAL STANDING OR PREROGATIVES. MANY OF THE NEW APPOINTEES HAVE EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE PARTY AS WELL AS WITHIN IT AND MAY BE MORE AWARE OF POLAND'S DIFFICULTIES AND MORE FLEXIBLE IN THEIR APPROACH TO SOLVING THEM. HOWEVER THE APPOINTMENT AS HEAD OF THE WARSAW PARTY COMMITTEE OF AN OFFICIAL WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE EVENTS IN GDANSK IN 1970 WHICH ENDED IN BLOODSHED HAS BEEN GREETED WITH DISMAY BY MANY PARTY MEMBERS.

5. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT SINCE JULY HAS FALLEN BELOW LAST YEAR'S LEVEL. THE POOR GRAIN HARVEST, COMBINED WITH A DISASTROUS POTATO CROP, HAS LED TO A SERIOUS FODDER SHORTAGE, REDUCED ANIMAL STOCKS, INCREASED SLAUGHTER AND VERY HIGH PRICES FOR GRAIN AND POTATOES ON THE PRIVATE MARKET. MEAT PURCHASES FROM THE WEST AND FROM EASTERN EUROPE WILL BE INADEQUATE TO FILL THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN DEMAND (BACKED BY HIGHER WAGES) AND SUPPLY. PLANS FOR RATIONING OF MEAT AND FATS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED FOR DISCUSSION AND SHOULD TAKE EFFECT FROM 1 JANUARY, BUT THE AUTHORITIES ARE STRESSING THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED. THE PRICES PAID TO FARMERS FOR MEAT, CEREALS, EGGS

AND OTHER BASIC PRODUCTS ARE BEING RAISED SUBSTANTIALLY TO ENCOURAGE OUTPUT AND SALES TO THE STATE; BUT THESE WILL SCARCELY AFFECT MARKET SUPPLIES BEFORE LATE 1981 OR 1982 AND MEANWHILE WILL CAUSE BUDGET SUBSIDIES TO

RISE EVEN FURTHER. MANY SHOPS ARE NOW RUNNING SERIOUSLY SHORT OF FOOD, MEAT QUEUES ARE LENGTHENING, AND BASIC ITEMS SUCH AS HEATING FUEL, SUGAR, DAIRY PRODUCTS AND POTATOES ARE INCREASINGLY SCARCE. THE PROBLEMS ARE EXACERBATED BY HOARDING.

6. SOVIET MEDIA COMMENT STILL CONSISTS MAINLY OF REPORTS FROM THE POLISH PRESS, THE MOST FREQUENT THEMES BEING THE DANGER OF WESTERN SUBVERSION, THE GRAVITY OF POLAND'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE NEED FOR A RETURN TO NORMAL WORK. THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT SINCE THE LAST PETROV ARTICLE ON 27 SEPTEMBER AND THE FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE POLISH CRISIS BY A SOVIET OFFICIAL CAME IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON 15 NOVEMBER WITH ZAMYATIN, HEAD OF THE PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT. IN THIS ZAMYATIN REFERRED TO ATTEMPTS, ENCOURAGED FROM OUTSIDE, TO FORM A "STRUCTURALLY AND LEGALLY EXISTING OPPOSITION" TO THE PRESENT SOCIALIST SYSTEM, AND TO A TEAMING UP OF ANTI-SOCIALIST GROUPS INSIDE THE COUNTRY WITH EXTERNAL GROUPS OPPOSED TO SOCIALIST POLAND. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS NOT REPORTED THE REGISTRATION OF SOLIDARNOSC, BUT IN A RARE REFERENCE TO THE UNION IZVESTIYA HAS QUOTED PEOPLE IN WARSAW AS BELIEVING THAT A GENERAL TRANSPORT STRIKE ORGANISED BY SOLIDARNOSC MIGHT AFFECT POLAND'S NATIONAL AND DEFENCE INTERESTS AND DISRUPT RAILWAY TRAFFIC ACROSS POLAND. THIS IS THE FIRST HINT WE HAVE SEEN THAT SOVIET SECURITY INTERESTS MIGHT BE JEOPARDISED BY EVENTS IN POLAND. THIS AND OTHER SOVIET COMMENT TO DATE SUGGEST THAT ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET UNION DISLIKES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS IN POLAND, IT IS PREPARED TO TOLERATE THEM SO LONG AS THEY PLAY A RESPONSIBLE ROLE (AND ON THE ASSUMPTION, NO DOUBT, THAT IN THE LONGER TERM THEY WILL COME UNDER PARTY CONTROL AGAIN) BUT THAT IT WILL NOT BE TOLERABLE FOR THEM TO PLAY AN OVERT POLITICAL ROLE.

7. THE SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED IN POLAND IN THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIET LEADERS CONTINUE TO BE MAINLY CONCERNED ABOUT A POSSIBLE BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN POLAND, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE POLES' ABILITY TO DEAL WITH SUCH A SITUATION IS DOUBTFUL. BUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE STRENGTHENED THE RUSSIANS' OTHER BIG FEAR: THAT OF A PROGRESSIVE EROSION OF THE VERY BASIS OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM IN POLAND. AT PRESENT THE POLISH REGIME IS BUYING RELATIVE DOMESTIC PEACE AT THE COST OF CONSTANT CONCESSION TO UNION DEMANDS AND LOSS OF ITS OWN AUTHORITY. THERE MUST BE SOME QUESTION WHETHER IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCE THE RUSSIANS WILL CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE POLISH REGIME TO SEEK ITS OWN SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS: THEY COULD WELL PRESS KANIA TO TAKE A TOUGHER LINE WITH SOLIDARNOSC. IN ANY CASE, UNLESS THE RADICALS IN SOLIDARNOSC CAN BE BROUGHT TO LIMIT THEIR DEMANDS, THE RISK OF EITHER A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES OR A TOTAL BREAKDOWN OF PARTY CONTROL WILL CONTINUE TO GROW. AND EITHER SITUATION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAD TO SOVIET INTERVENTION.

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